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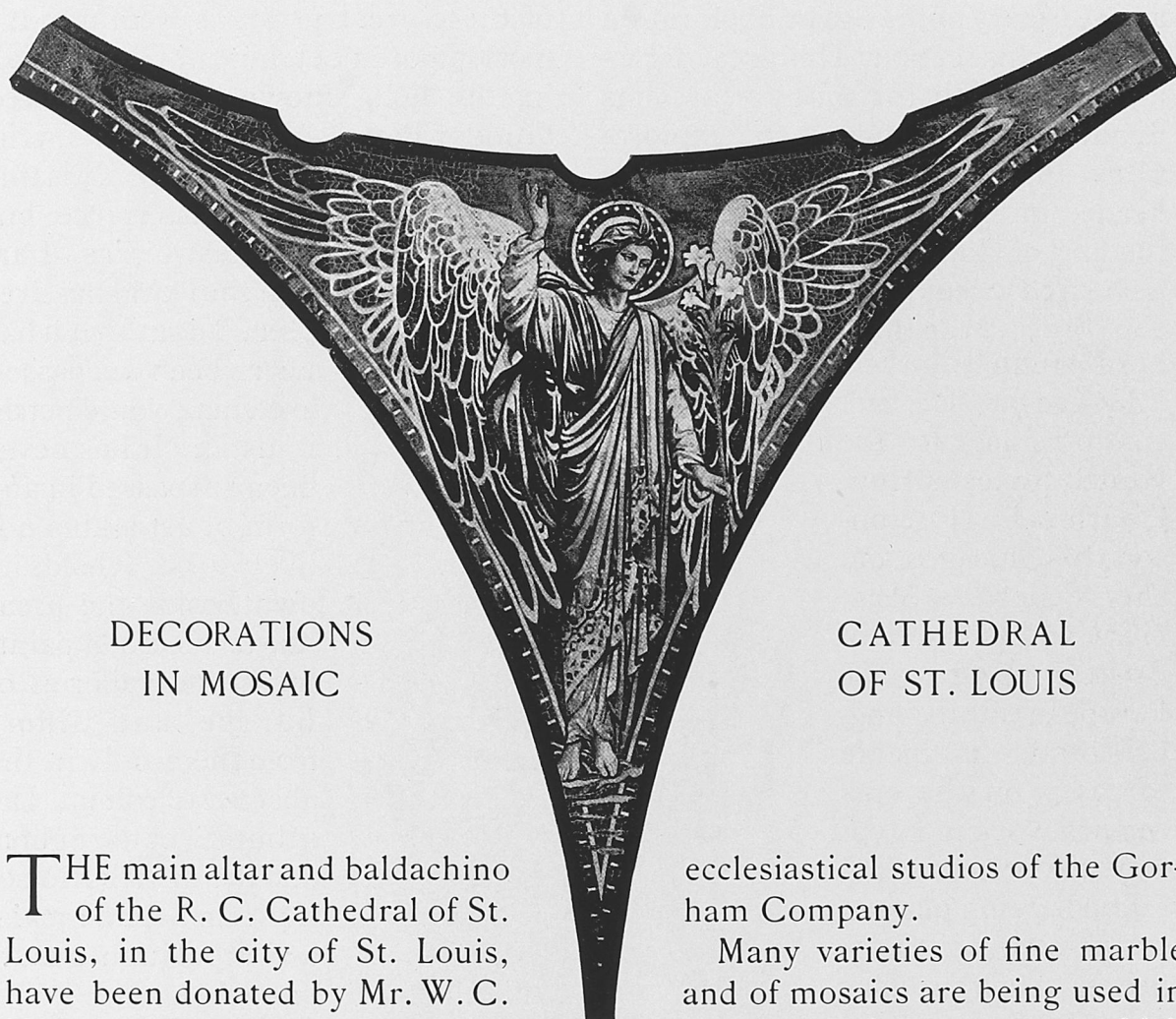
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DECORATIONS
IN MOSAIC

CATHEDRAL
OF ST. LOUIS

THE main altar and baldachino of the R. C. Cathedral of St. Louis, in the city of St. Louis, have been donated by Mr. W. C. McBride. Their designer is Mr. George D. Barnett of the architectural firm that built the cathedral itself, Messrs. Barnett, Haynes and Barnett. The style of altar and baldachino is Byzantine; and as this structure within a structure is fifty-seven feet in height, with a diameter of thirty-six feet, it affords great and appropriate opportunity for the richest kind of ornamentation, both in the materials used and in the colours. The enrichment is being carried out in New York in the

Archangel in Dome
of Main Altar

ecclesiastical studios of the Gorham Company.

Many varieties of fine marble and of mosaics are being used in the design of the structure, which is supported by fourteen columns in Brescia violetta and other marbles. In themselves these columns are highly ornate and furnish a very beautiful colour to the supports. The great amount of mosaic employed in the designs of figures and conventions also takes full advantage of the scope afforded by the Byzantine character of the structure, and in these mosaics red and gold freely are permitted to predominate.

The introduction of a brilliant and



One of the Four Latin Fathers in the Retable

luxurious red has been taken into account in the cartoons from which the mosaics have been developed. Besides innumerable conventional and symbolic designs, the figures carried out in mosaic are the four Latin fathers on the retable and the four archangels on the interior dome—St. Michel, St. Gabriel, St. Raphael and St. Uriel, while, at the top of the interior of the dome, are the emblems of the Trinity. The nine choirs of angels in the sanctuary—Seraphim, Cherubim, Thrones, Dominations, Powers, Virtues, Principalities, Archangels and Angels are also in mosaics. The four marble statues of the evangelists are on the semi-circular projecting sides of the baldachino.

A very striking feature of the design is a marble pedestal back of the altar. This pedestal supports a large bronze crucifix, upon which the Corpus is carried out in Italian statuary marble, as also are the figures of the Virgin and St. Joseph on either side. Another feature is the rich inlaying of the tabernacle with lapis lazuli, amethysts, crystals and other semi-precious stones, while the marble mosaic floor is produced with such a variety of rich marbles that the general effect is like in brilliance to a Persian rug.

In designing this gift from Mr. McBride to the Cathedral of St. Louis Mr. Barnett had in view something more than a beautiful structure. It is well to quote his own words. "I am eager," he said, "to bring about a revival of the art of working in mosaics in its original purity. I believe that mosaic work now inclines too much toward the pictorial, whereas its original conventions, as expressed in the less pic-



One of the Angel Choirs in the Sanctuary

torial but more purely decorative cartoon, took into account the legitimate technical possibilities of the medium and its limitations. The smoothly pictorial design in mosaics is an attempt to make the material produce an effect of smoothness and grace, for which it was not intended. In fact, pictorial smoothness is foreign to it.

"My desire is to re-establish the most beautiful and distinctive of the decorative arts, to remove it from the dangerous field of picture copying and carry it back to the luminous rendering of the cartoon. There is where it properly belongs. If, all along the line, we hear the cry, 'use terra cotta as terra cotta, stone as stone; neither in imitation of the other'; why not also 'use mosaic as mosaic, picture as picture, neither in imitation of the other, for one is the field of a material, the other of the brush!'

"If you ask me about colour, my reply is that colour is an art within an art, especially in mosaics. Sometimes I pause and inquire of myself if it was not, after all, a misfortune when the existence of more than four colours—red, yellow, blue and green—and at that the highest keyed expression of them, was discovered. Developing, cartooning, symbolizing with a frank admission of the materials and their texture with which the design is being carried out, I hope the work I am directing will result in a school, not a school that shall be a slave to precedent, or in which excuse will be made for bad drawing, bad composition and other defects on the score of tradition, but one which shall avoid the pitfalls of modernism, and maintain the art in its essential integrity."